

Week Ending Friday, September 3, 1993

The President's Radio Address

August 28, 1993

Good morning. Thirty years ago today a great American spoke about his dream for equality, brotherhood, and the need to make real the promises of democracy. His voice thundered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, across the great Mall in Washington, and into our homes, our heart, and our history. That man, of course, was the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

He lived and died in a great struggle to close the gap between our words and our deeds, to make good on good intentions, to see that none of us can be fully free until all of us are fully free, to make us all agents of change.

In the 30 years since Martin Luther King gave what I believe is the greatest speech by an American in my lifetime, we've come a long way. But clearly, we've got a long way to go before realizing his dreams. We owe it to him, to his work, to his memory to re-dedicate ourselves today to the causes of civil rights, civic responsibility, and economic opportunity for every American. In the last 7 months, we've made some great strides on that road.

To begin to turn good words into better deeds we first had to get our economic house in order. That's what we did by breaking gridlock and passing a tough economic program to cut our deficit by nearly \$500 billion over 5 years, to give new incentives to businesses to expand, to individuals to invest, and to create millions of new high-wage jobs here at home.

Already we've felt some of the good side effects of getting serious about our economy. Unemployment has dipped to its lowest level in 22 months, and interest rates are at their lowest rates in 20 years. We've also won some important battles for working families. The Family Leave Act now permits people to take some time off from work to care for a sick

family member or a newborn child without losing their job. And changes in the tax laws now provide that no one who works 40 hours a week with children in the home will live in poverty. That's a big first step in welfare reform and in ending welfare as we know it. It's prowork and profamily.

We're moving to open the doors of college education to all Americans at a time when education is more important than ever to getting good jobs. We've reorganized the student loan program so that there will be lower interest rates, and repayments will be tied to income and, therefore, easier to make. We're on the verge of passing the national service program to give our young people the chance to use their energies and talents to rebuild our communities and, at the same time, to help pay for their college educations.

We've been moving on a massive program of defense conversion to help defense workers, military personnel, and communities who won the cold war build a brighter future even in the face of defense reductions. And because we want America to be a safer place, I've sent to Congress a crime bill that, among other things, will put tens of thousands more police officers on the streets and will pass the Brady bill to provide for a waiting period before handguns can be bought.

We're moving to change politics as usual. The Senate has passed a campaign finance reform bill that gives less influence to political action committees and opens the doors of communication to all candidates. And they've passed a lobby reform bill to reduce the influence of lobbyists. Now we have to get the House to pass these bills, too.

So in the quiet of this August day, as we reflect on what's happened over the last several months, we can say that together we've made a good beginning, but the job has just begun. There are still great challenges out there for Americans. There aren't enough jobs, incomes are too stagnant, and there is too much insecurity for too many families.

Our biggest challenge is to reform health care. It's the main reason millions of people can't get pay raises. It's the chief cause of insecurity for millions of families. It's the biggest culprit in the Federal deficit. And it's a threat to America's business growth because we're spending over 14 percent of our income on health care. Our competitors, the Germans and the Japanese, are spending just over 8 percent of their income on health care, and they have every bit as good a health care system, in most ways, as we do.

Soon the First Lady's task force will make its recommendations on what we need to do to ensure that every American has access to good, affordable health care, a plan that keeps what's good about our health care system—our doctors, our nurses, our health care providers, our medical research, our great technology—but a plan that changes what's wrong: an increasingly expensive and unjustifiable system of finance, one that's too bureaucratic, one that has runaway costs.

Another urgent task for our country is to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement. Last year I told the American people this agreement with Mexico and Canada could mean more jobs for Americans if it could be strengthened to ensure that our jobs would not be lost because of low environmental standards or depressed wages in Mexico. Today I can tell you we've won unprecedented provisions in this agreement that will help to guarantee that it will benefit all Americans. When it's in place, we'll open up a whole new world of job opportunity for Americans here at home by trading more with Mexico and ultimately with the rest of Latin America, the second fastest growing area in the world.

We're also dedicated to fixing our own Government, to reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, eliminating waste, increasing the quality of service, in giving you more value for your dollar. We haven't reexamined the way our Government works or doesn't work, for a very long time. But for the last several months, Vice President Gore has been studying the problem with the best experts in the country, and early next month we'll have his recommendations on how our Government can serve you better and save you money. Quite simply, we've still got a lot to do in

a town where change is hard and words too often substitute for real action. Congress, however, has already spent about 40 percent more time on the job than it did last year.

Many people say I'm pushing too hard for change. Well, 30 years ago today Martin Luther King said, "This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy." As our children go back to school and, after a great family vacation, I go back to work, I have faith that together we can do just that, make real the promises of democracy for all Americans.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on August 27 at a private residence on Martha's Vineyard, MA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 28.

Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

August 28, 1993

On this day 30 years ago, almost a quarter million Americans gathered in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial to ask our Nation to uphold its founding ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity for all.

As he looked at the crowd, Martin Luther King, Jr., must have been inspired by what he saw: people of every color, united in mutual respect and common purpose, representing America as it was meant to be and as it must be. In the words of A. Philip Randolph, whose vision of a multiracial movement for social justice inspired this historic demonstration, those who marched on August 28, 1963, were "the advance guard of a massive moral revolution for jobs and freedom."

Three decades later, we remember how far we have come on freedom's trail, and we rededicate ourselves to completing the journey. As a son of the South, I have seen in my own lifetime how racism held all of us down and how the civil rights movement set all of us free. We must never forget the hard-